

IMA 743 Collective Production

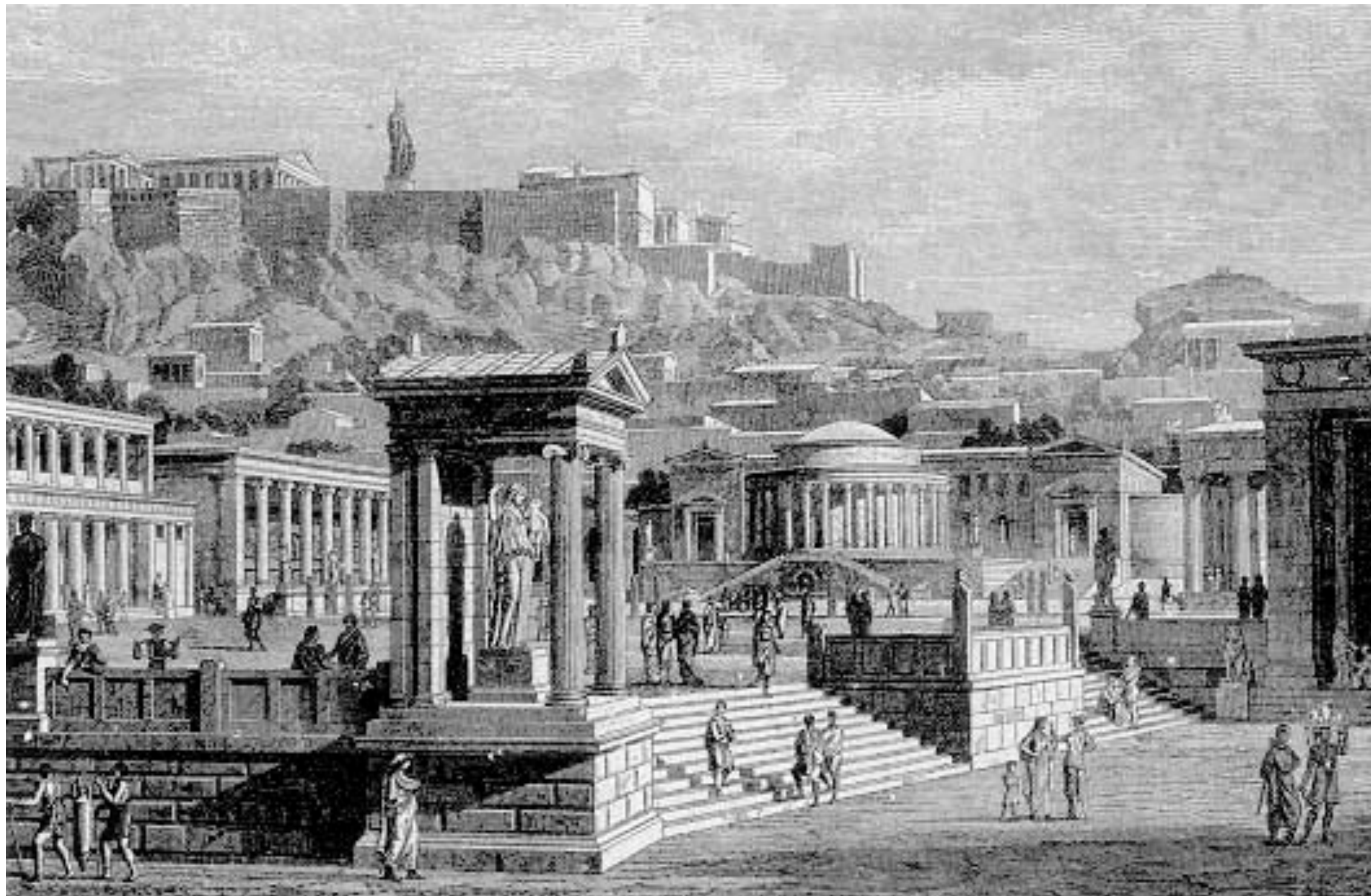
The Documentary and the Collective Subject in the 1930s

Marty Lucas • February 17, 2021

In a Democracy...

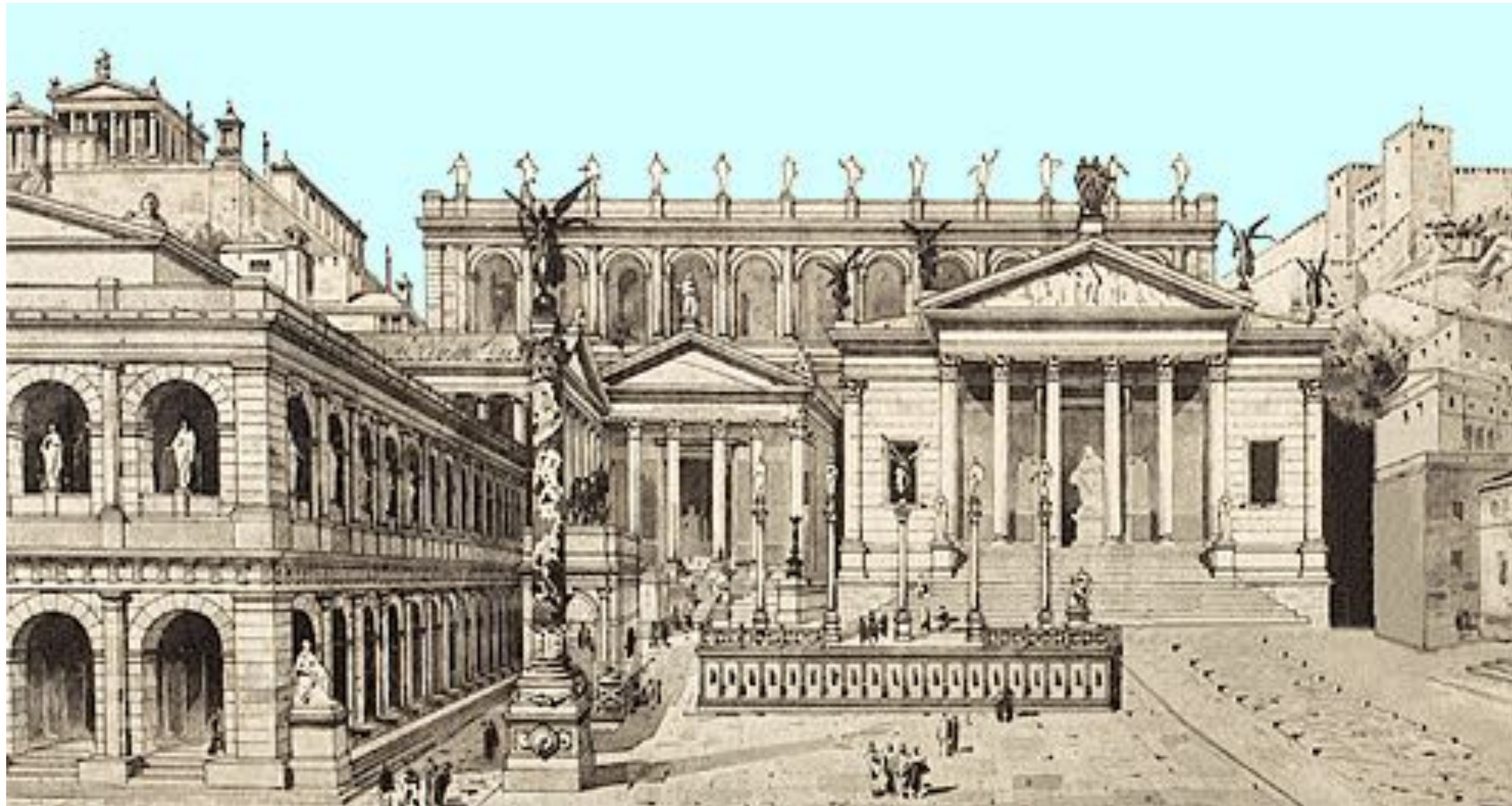
Public Space

Is the space of politics



Athenian Citizens discussing politics at the Agora

Res Publica*



The Roman Forum

In Rome, the role of the citizen was clearly articulated, as was the legal basis of the State...

* Literally “the public thing”

But a funny thing happened on the way to the Forum ...

Q: Who is a citizen?

A: Defined by who is not.



Meanwhile, back in Iceland...

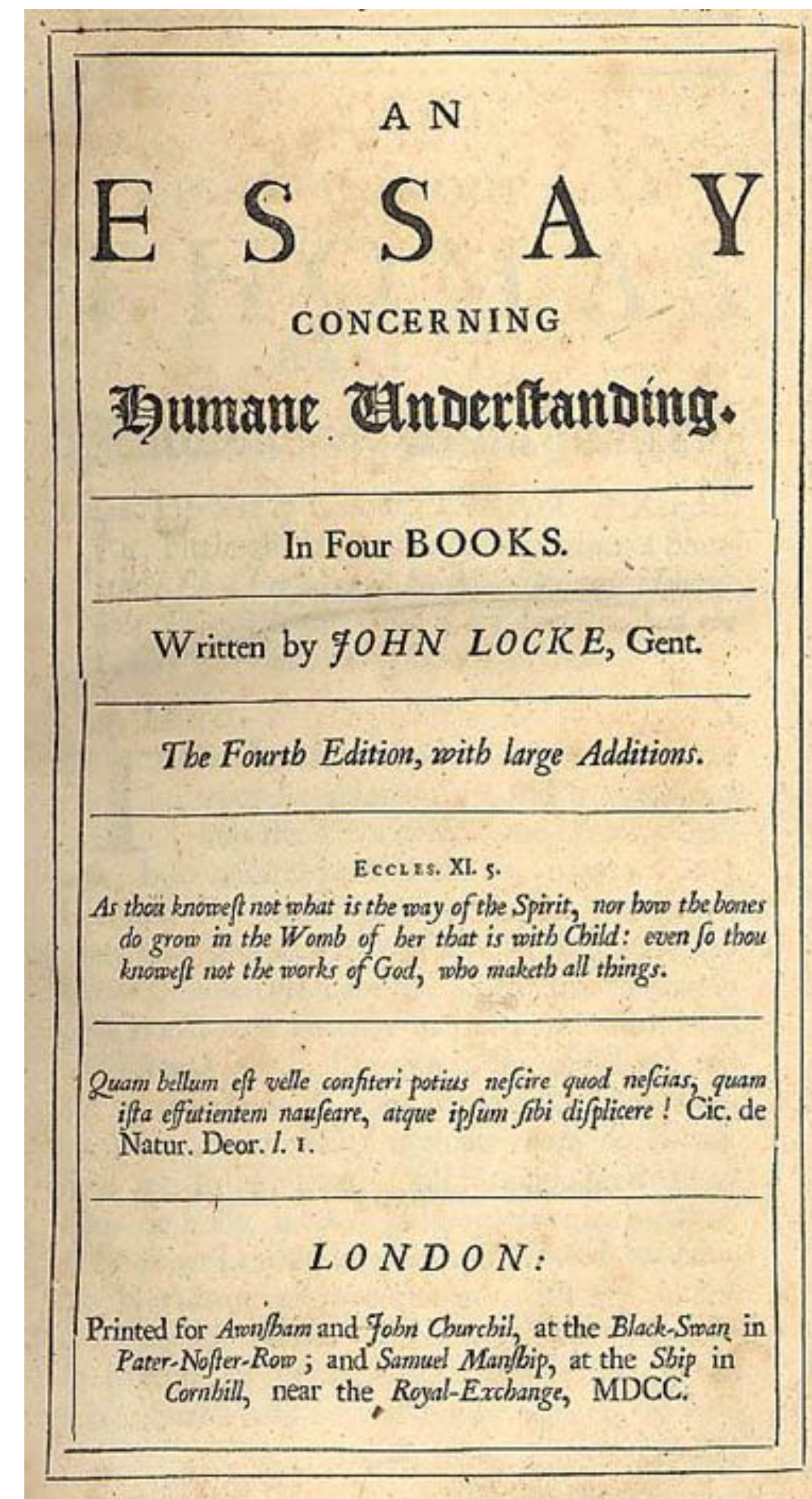


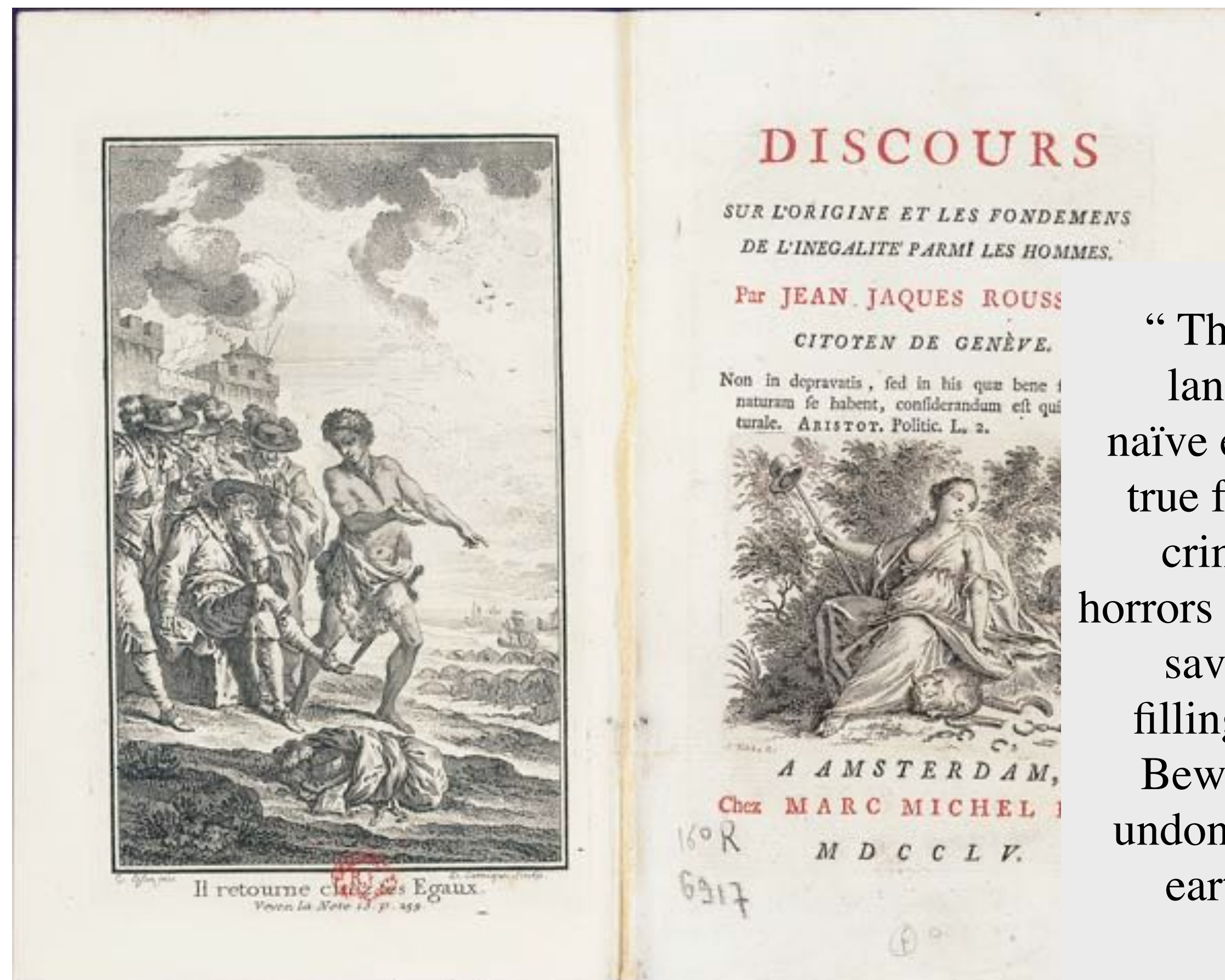
A Public “Thing”

The *Alþingi* or All-thing, starting in 930AD, is usually considered the first parliament.

Theories of the State

John Locke said that the State existed on the basis of an understood but tacit contract of the governed with the governing power.

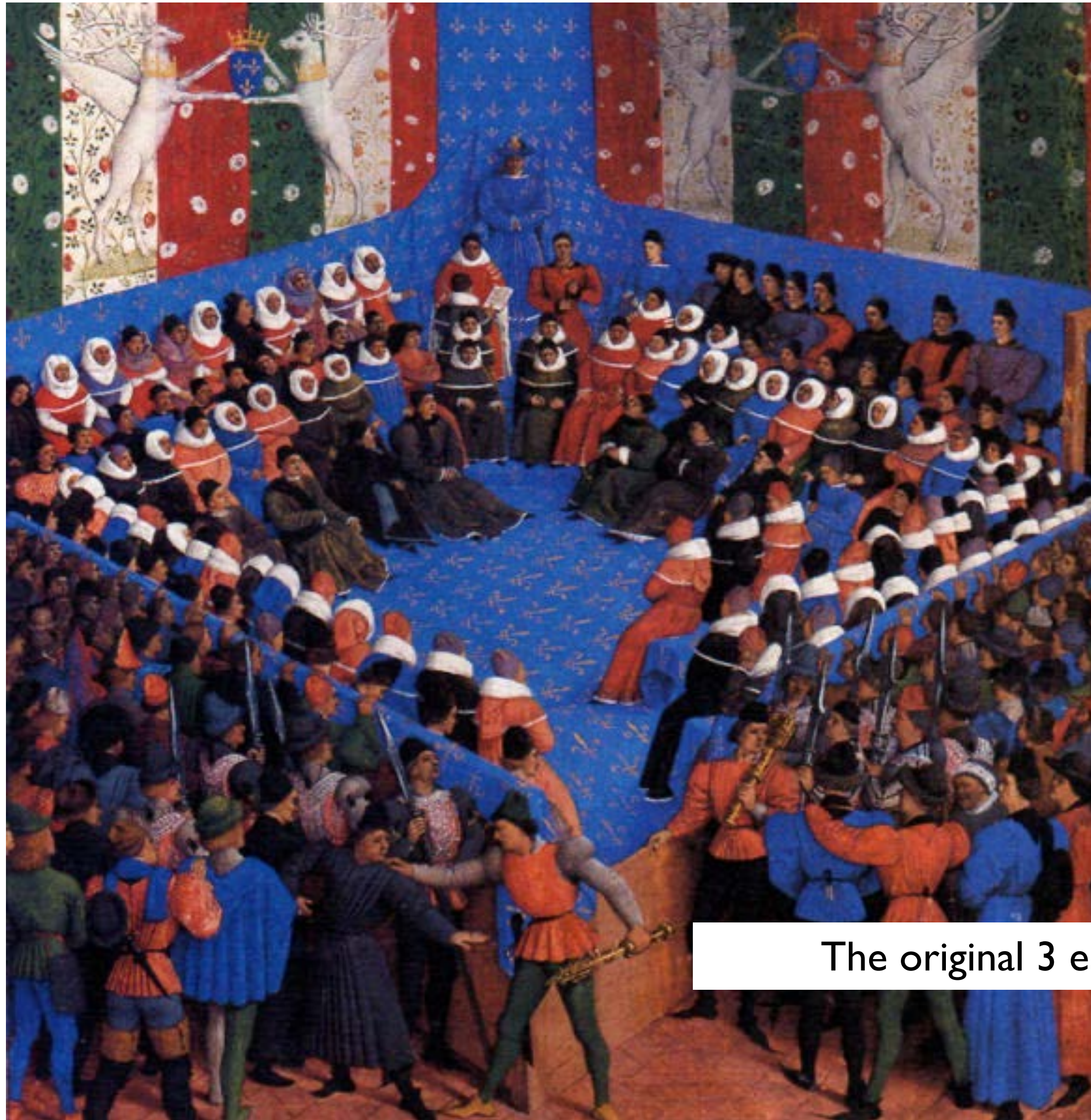




“ The first man who had fenced in a piece of land, said "This is mine," and found people naïve enough to believe him, that man was the true founder of [civil society](#). From how many crimes, wars, and murders, from how many horrors and misfortunes might not any one have saved mankind, by pulling up the stakes, or filling up the ditch, and crying to his fellows: Beware of listening to this impostor; you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all, and the earth itself to nobody. ”

— Jean-Jacques Rousseau, [Discourse on Inequality](#), 1754

Rousseau invents the idea of “Society”



Role of 4th Estate...

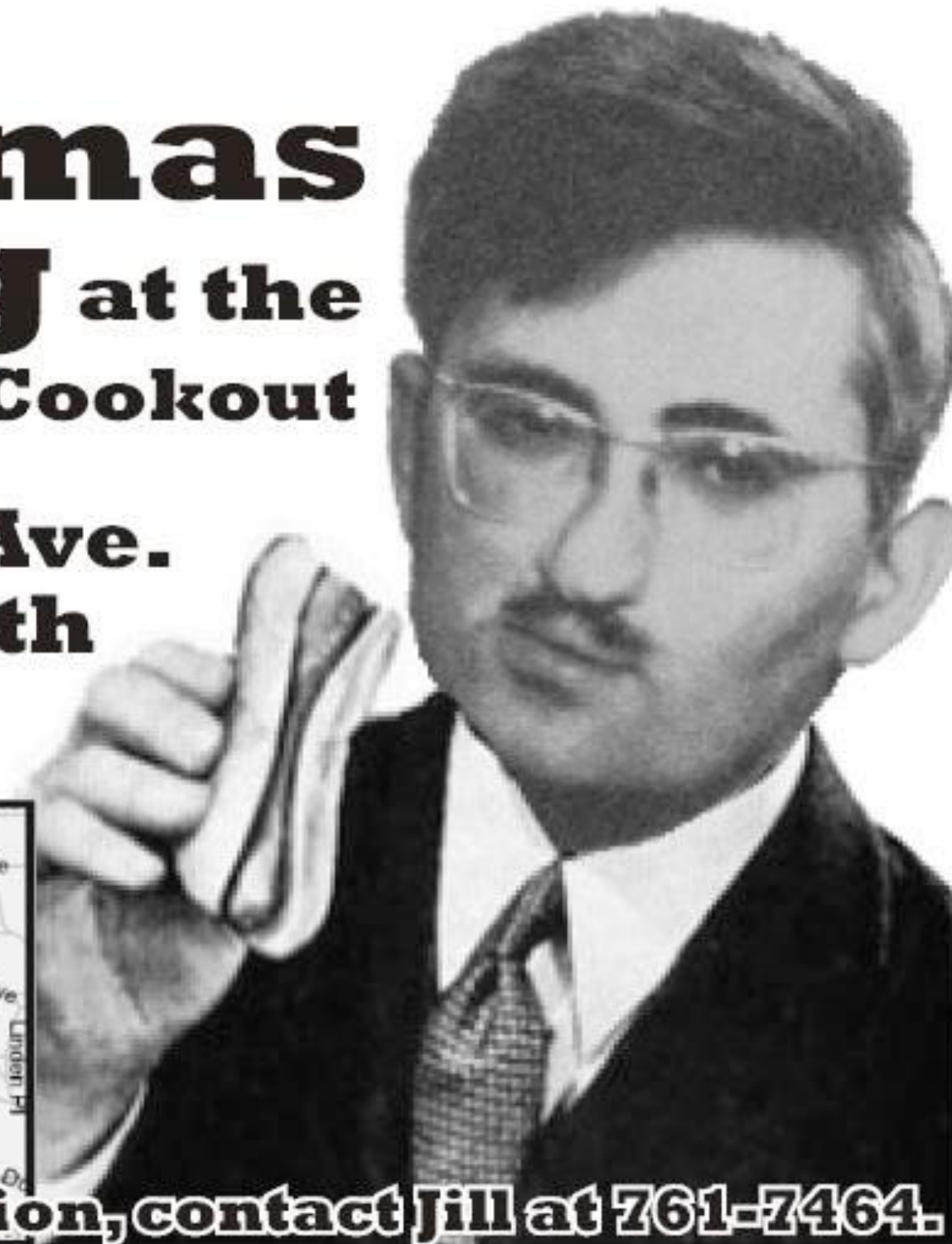
The original 3 estates are nobility, clergy and commoners....

Join us for a
**Habermas
Hotdog** at the
Sociology SAC Cookout

**238 Augusta Ave.
Thurs., May 5th
6:00 p.m.**



For more information, contact Jill at 761-7464.



The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere

An Inquiry into a
Category of Bourgeois Society

Jürgen Habermas

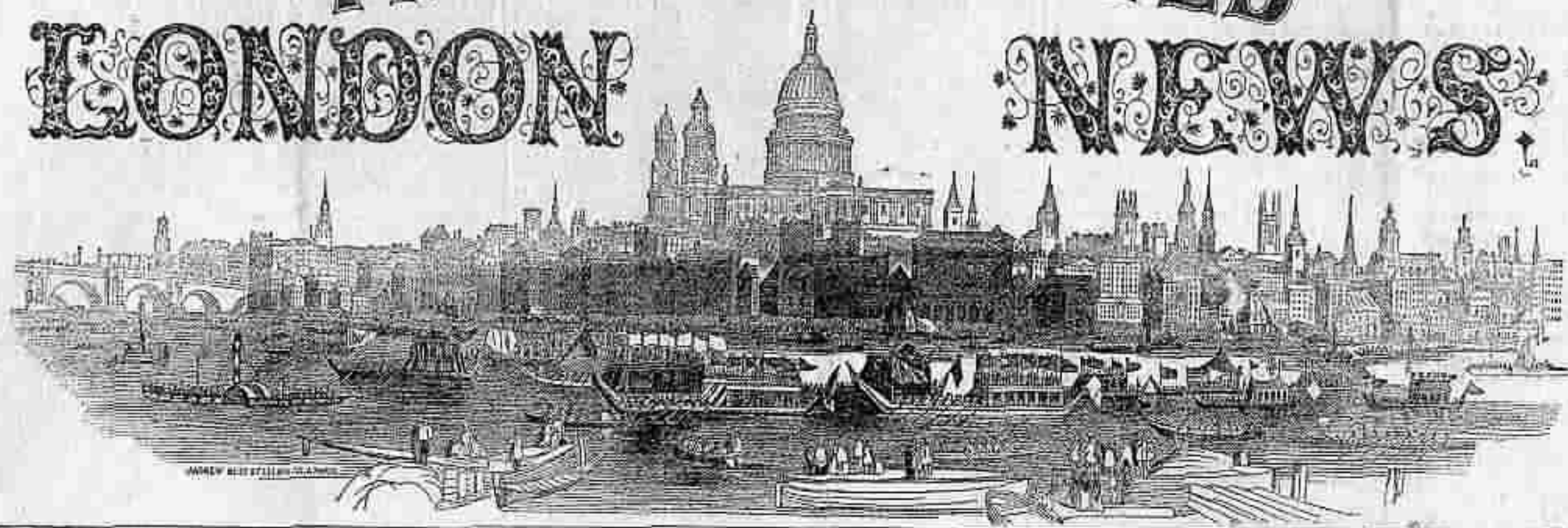
*translated by Thomas Burger
with the assistance
of Frederick Lawrence*

The concept of
the
Public Sphere....

The rise of the
Bourgeoisie and the
Democratic
(representative)
State



THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS



[No. 129.—Vol. V.]

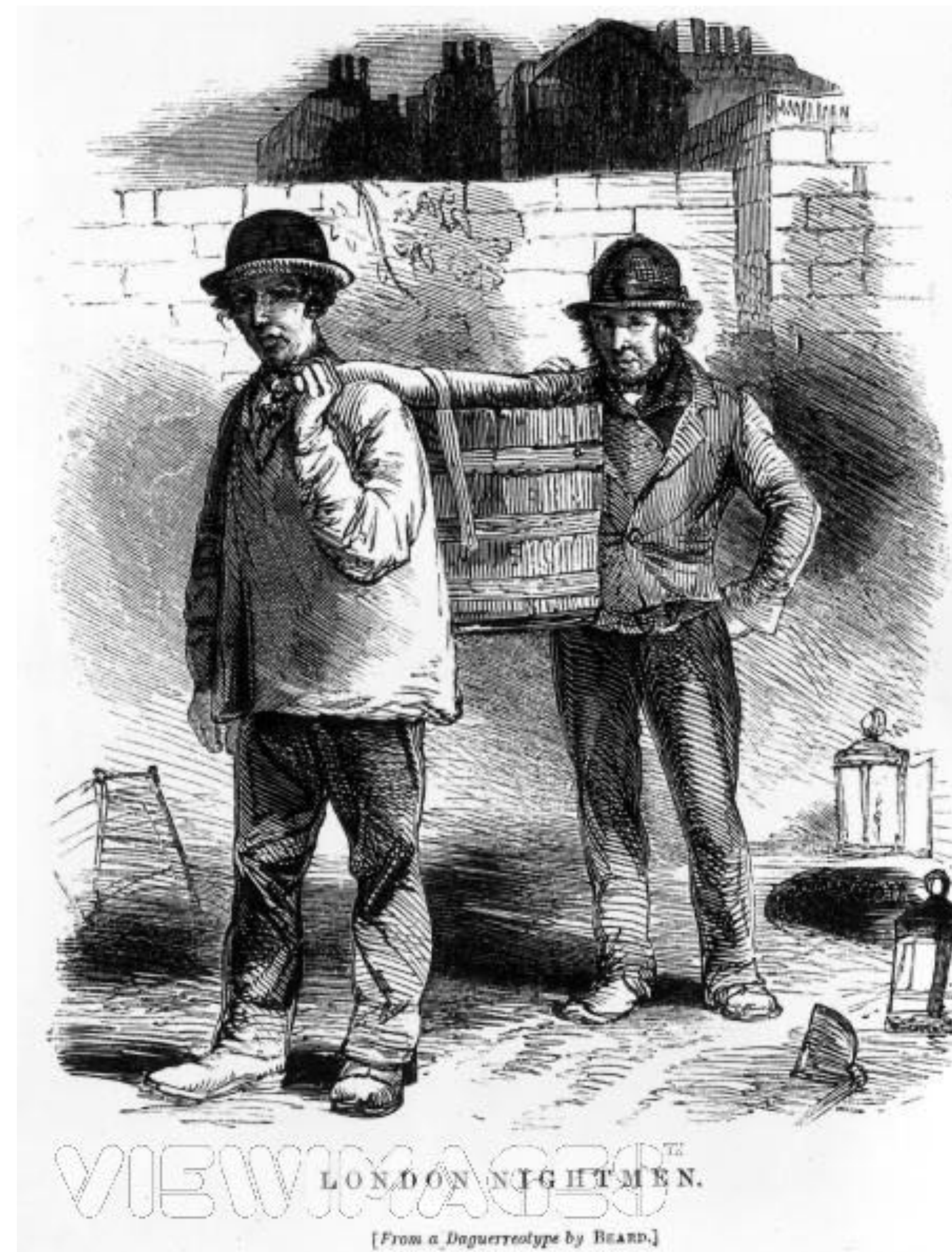
FOR THE WEEK ENDING SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1844.

[SIXPENCE.]

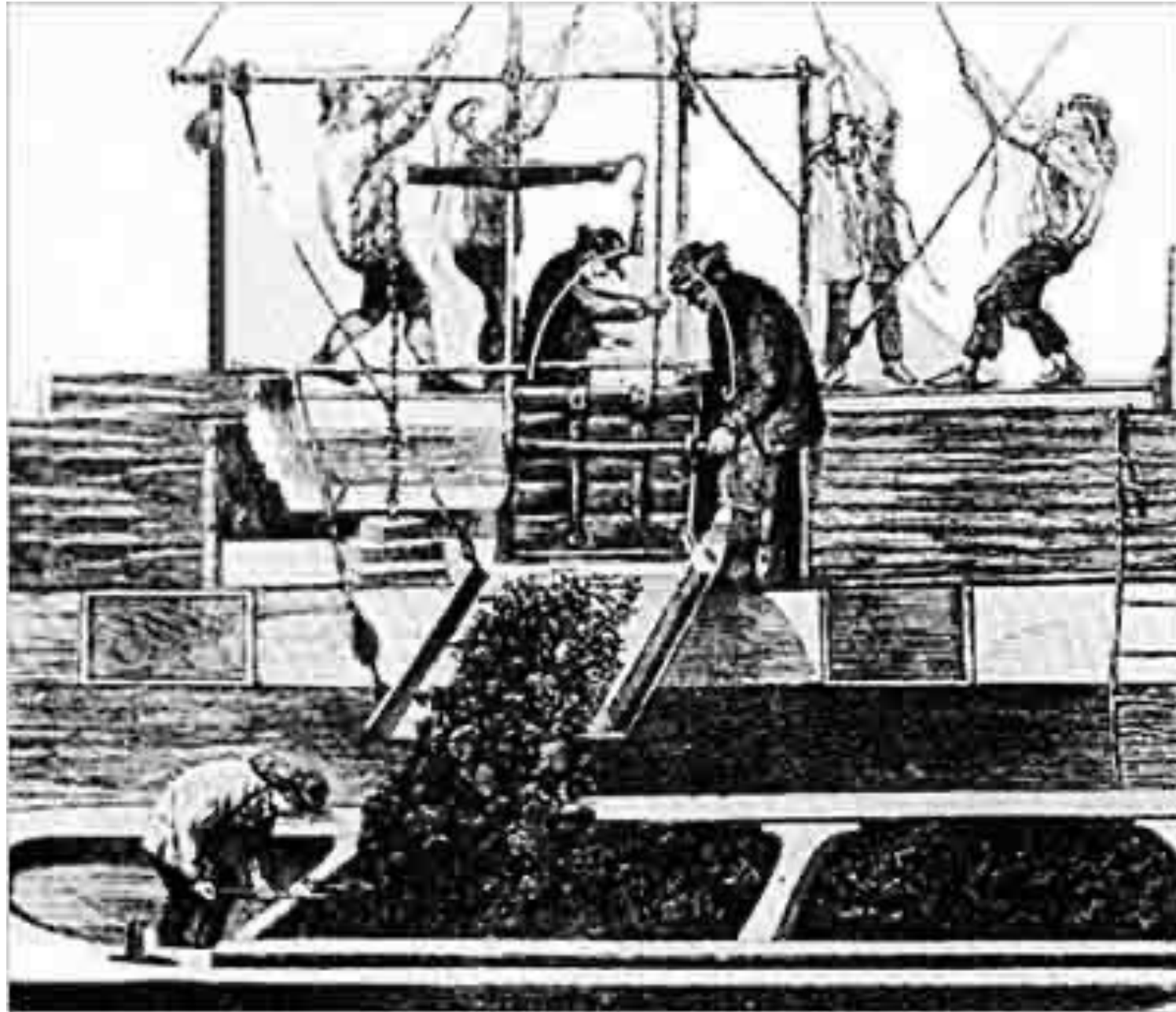
OBSERVATION

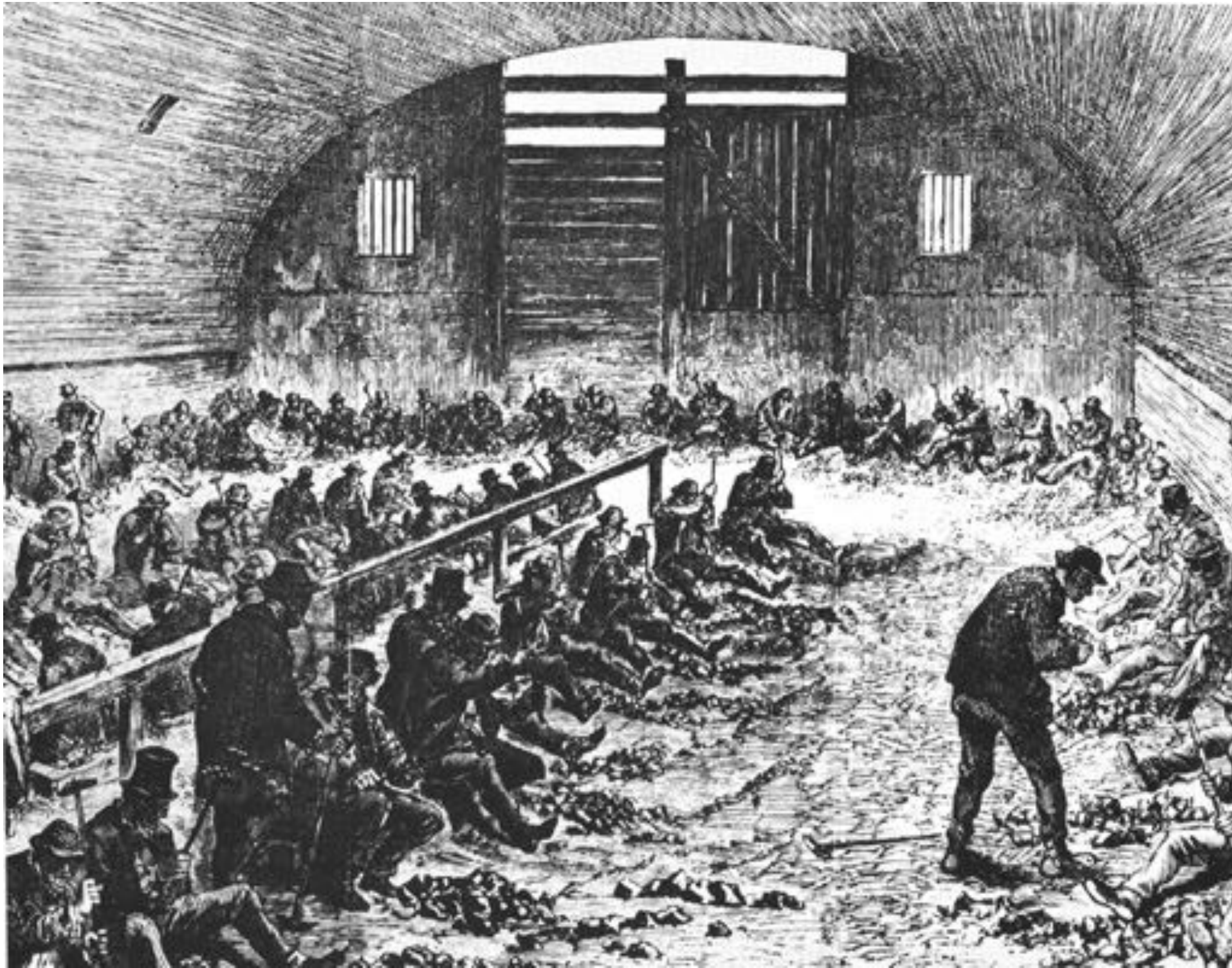
In 1851 the English journalist Henry Mayhew published volume one of *London Labor and the London Poor*. The book started as a series of articles in September of 1849, after a cholera epidemic killed 13,000 in Bermondsey, in the paper *The Morning Chronicle*. Other writers included John Stuart Mill and Charles Dickens whose own efforts were influenced by Mayhew's work.

THE WORKING CLASS CITY - London in the 1840s was a huge city (largest in Europe) full of a floating population, more like a modern Lagos than a European city. Mayhew both carefully observed, in a very non-judgemental way compared to other observers. He wasn't trying to save anyone's soul or blame their misery on them. He compared his observations to other people's statistics (social science documentation) His intentions were social, but not specifically missionary. He was also not a social scientist, so his engagements with people come through time unburdened in a way atypical of the prose of his era, journalistic or otherwise.



Just showing people working was very uncommon in Victorian media

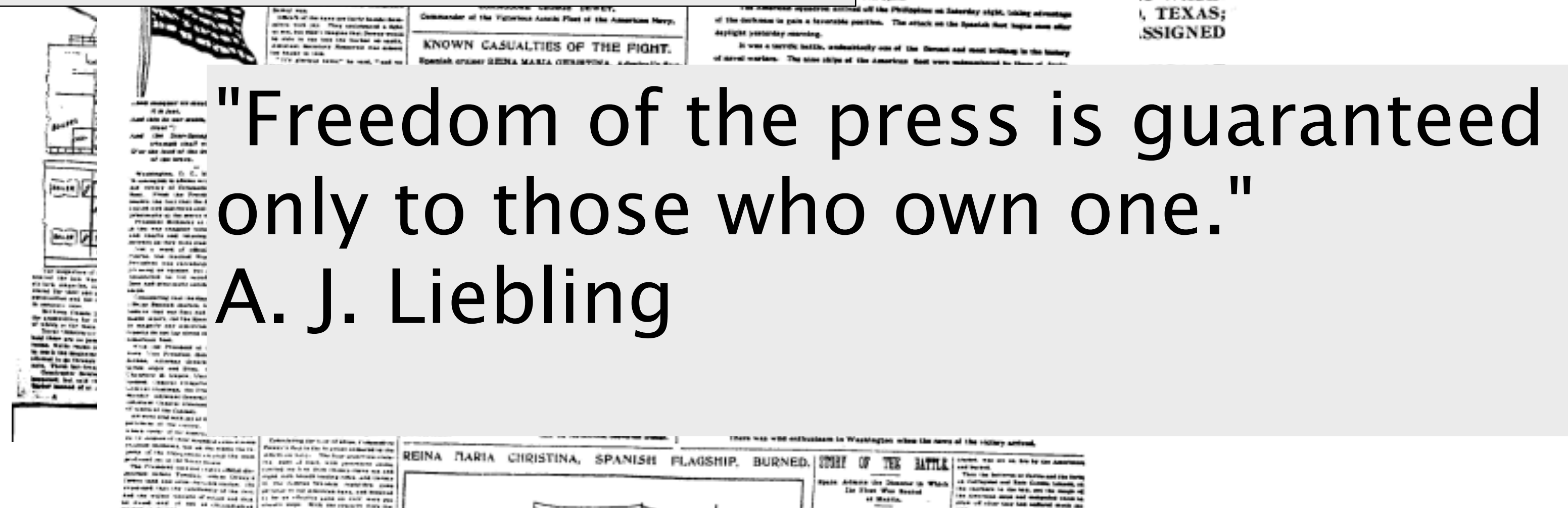




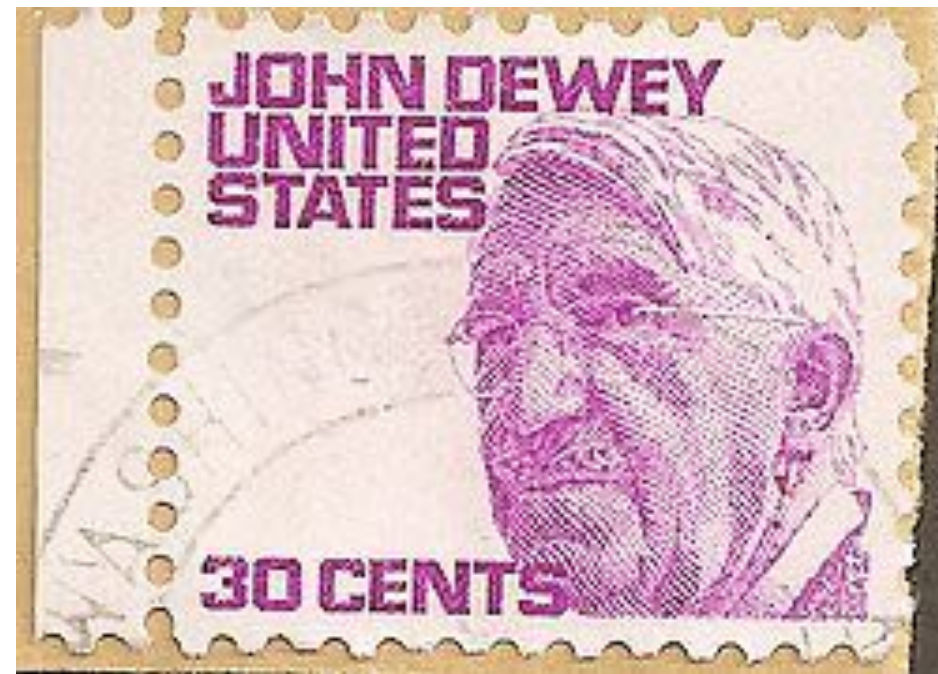
Poorhouses like this one were common, but not commonly thought about before Mayhew held them up to the spotlight. The illustrations were a key part of his approach.



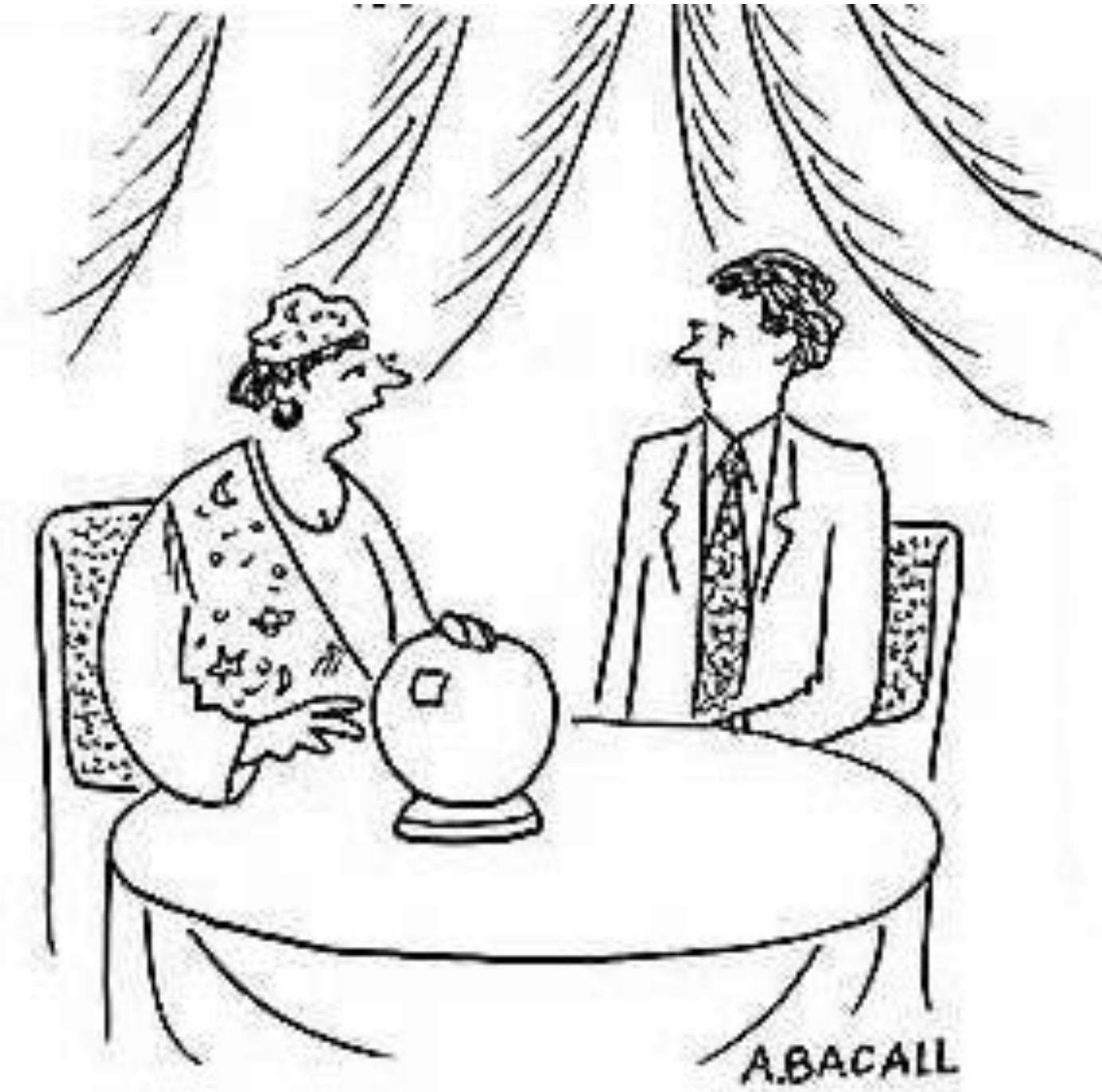
In 1890s Corporations take control of the economy and news becomes a commodity...



"Freedom of the press is guaranteed only to those who own one."
A. J. Liebling

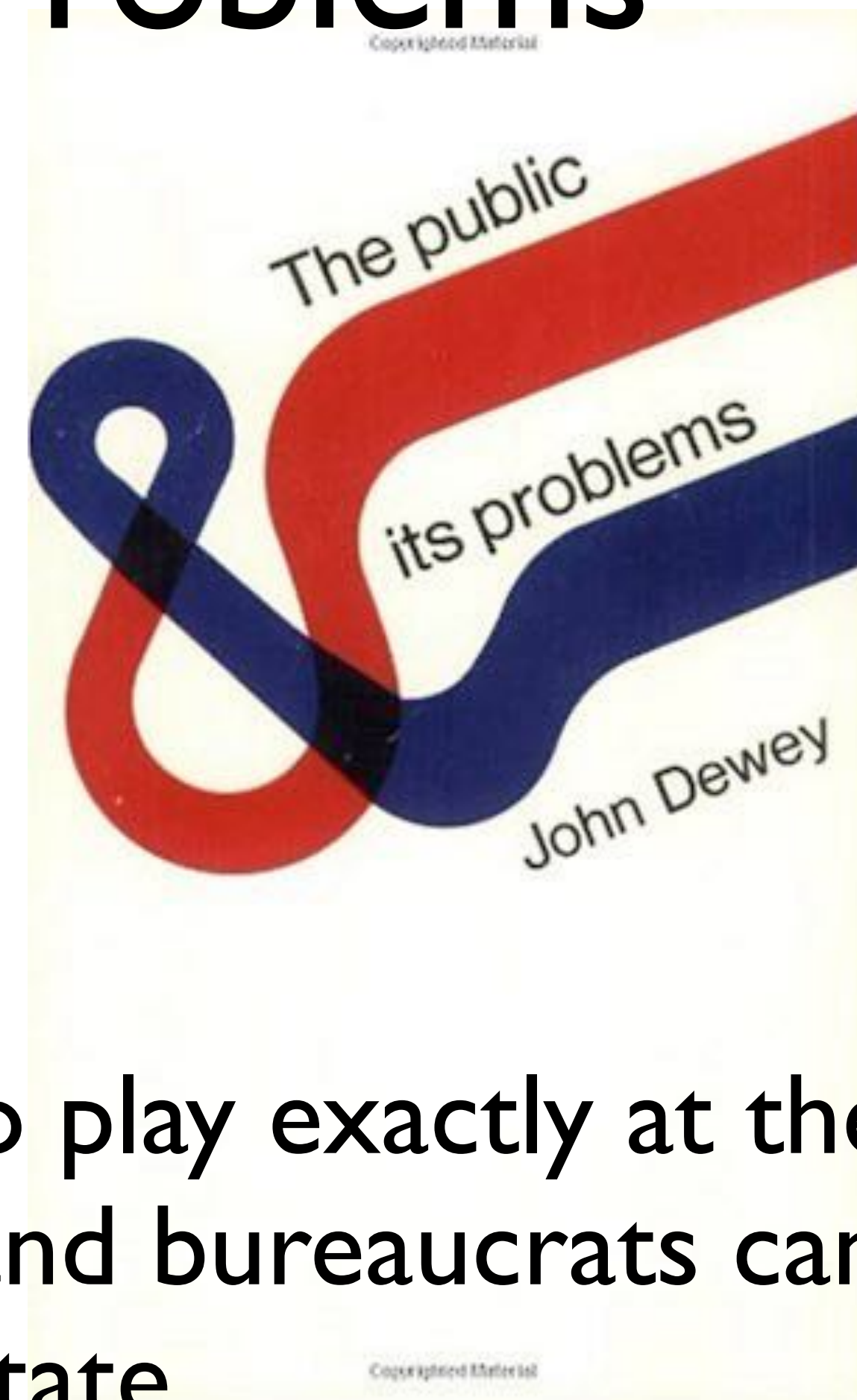


Where can politics go?



"I channeled John Dewey. He says if you want to be a good teacher, don't teach reading and writing. Teach students."

The Public & Its Problems



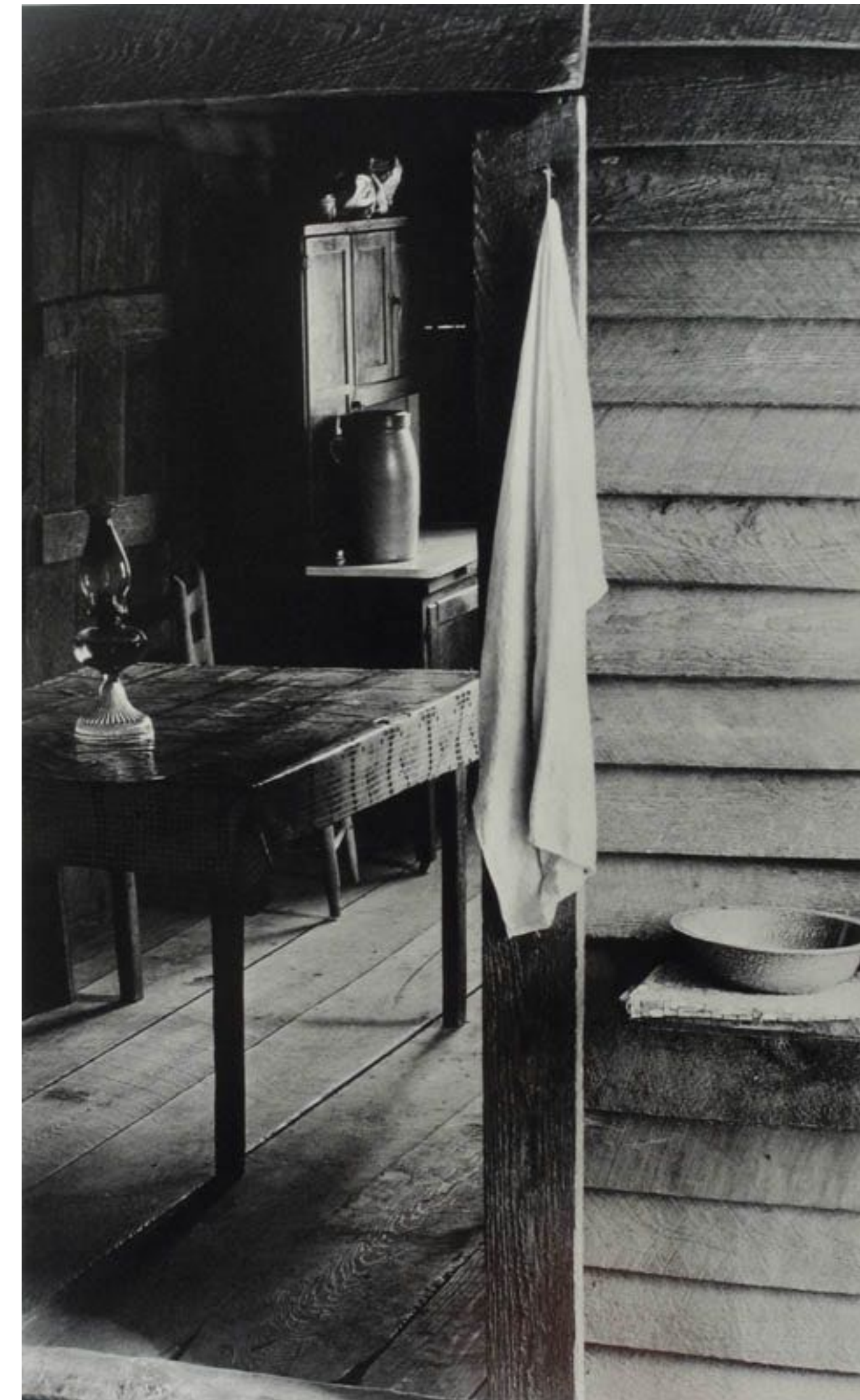
- The “public” comes into play exactly at the point when politicians and bureaucrats can no longer manage the state.

The Public Intellectual & the Great Depression





Let Us Now Praise Famous Men is a book with text by James Agee and photos by Walker Evans that documents the lives of White sharecroppers in the 1930s South.

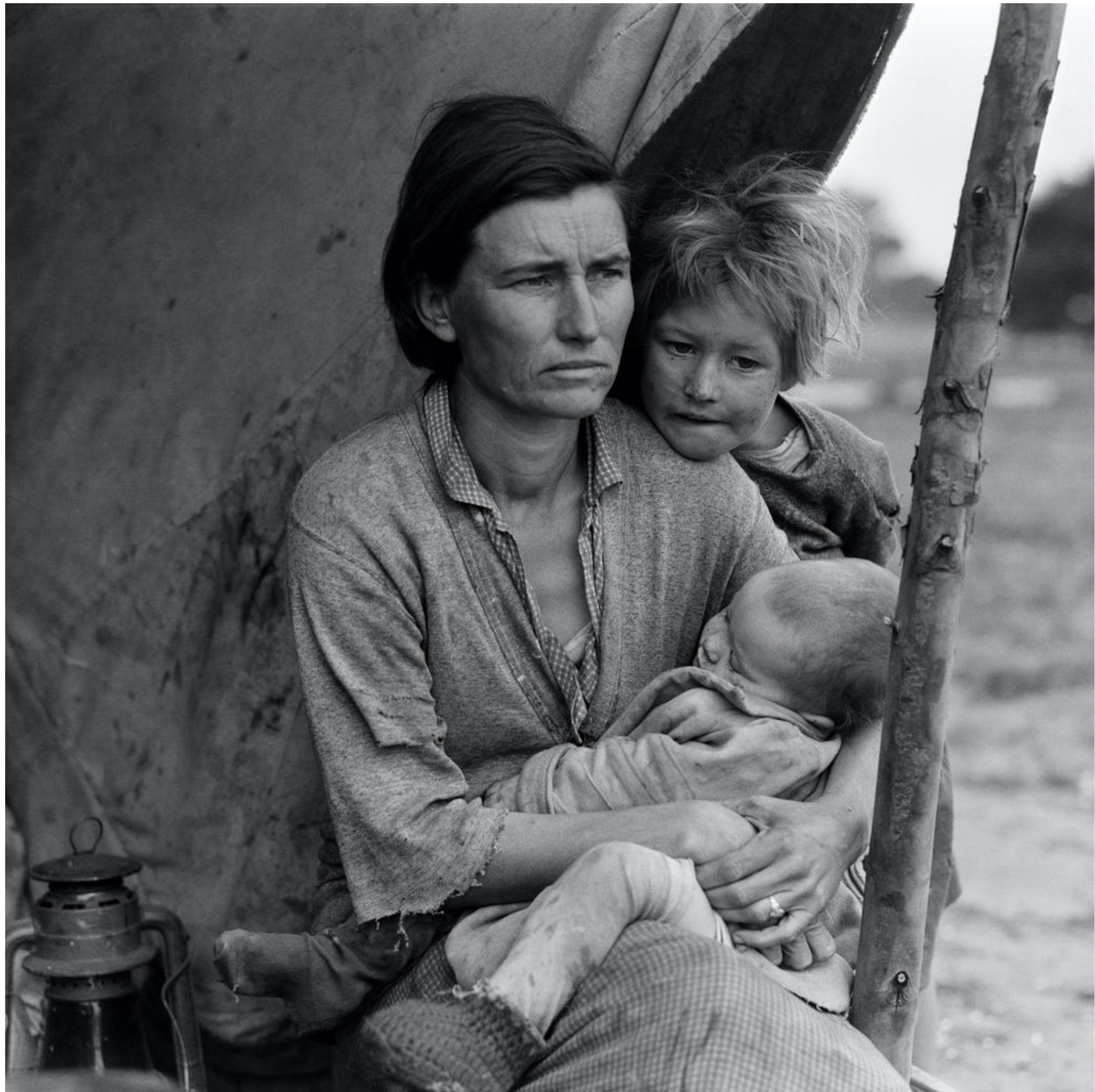




DOROTHEA LANGE

1895–1965

Like many artists, Lange
was hired by the US
government as a
documentary photographer



The rise of social documentary was a movement not just in film, but in still photography, literature, poetry, and the fine arts...

Positionality

The Vanguard Party

The Masses



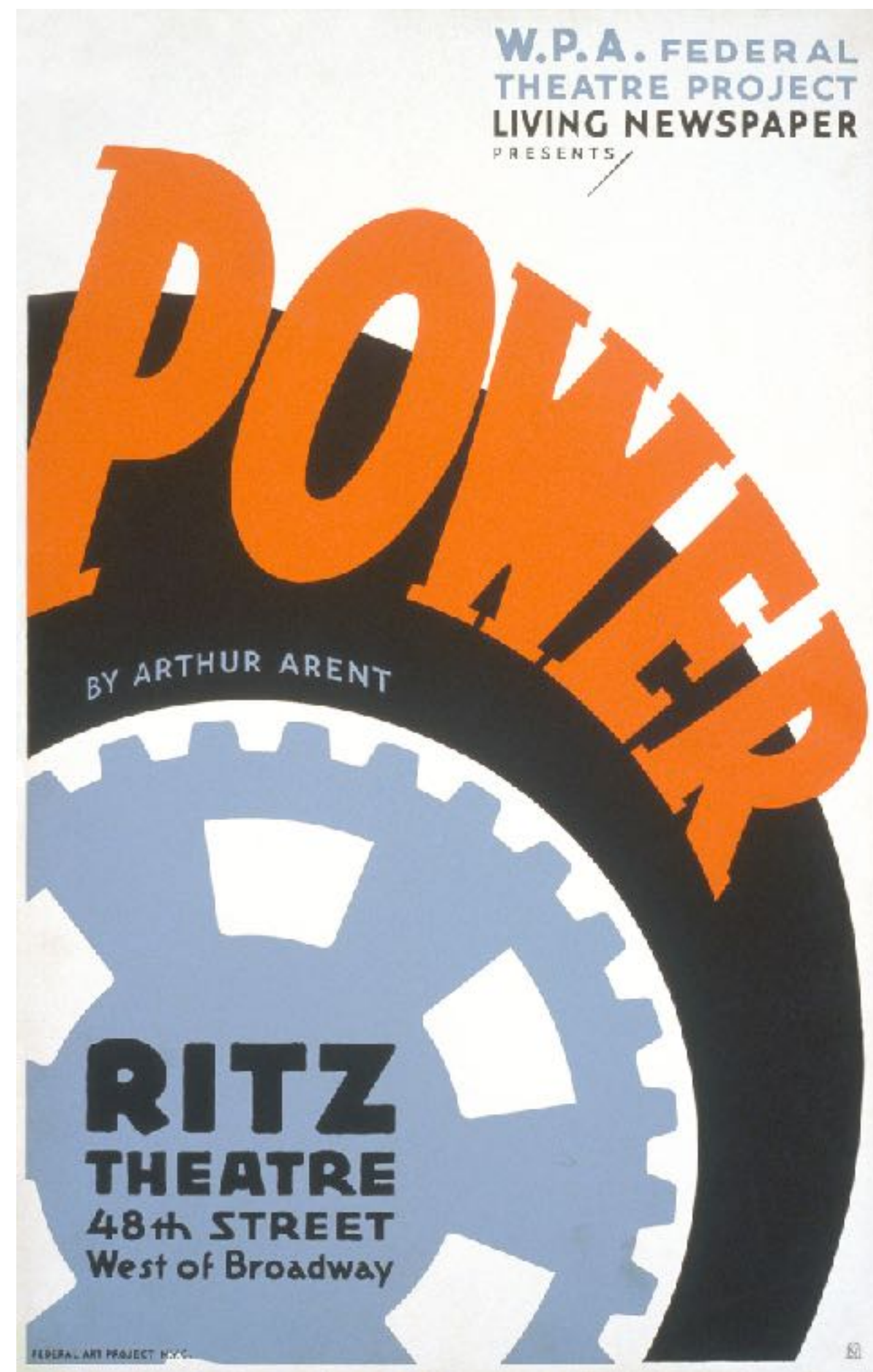
Sergei Eisenstein *Ten Days That Shook the World*

“What is the relation of the intellectual to the Revolution?”

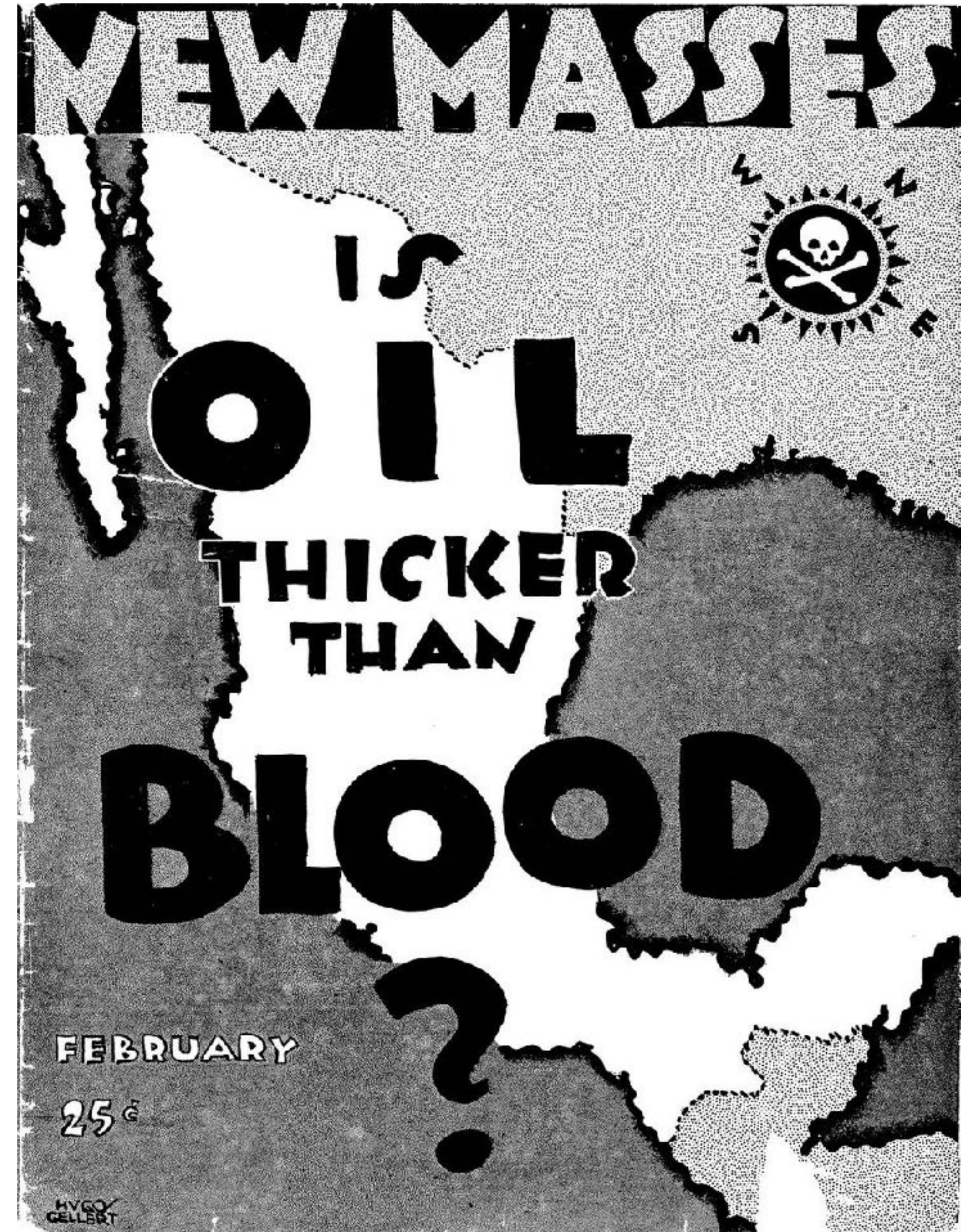


“A substantial part of the so-called left-wing writers have no other social function whatever, than eternally to draw new effects from the political situation to amuse the public.”

Walter Benjamin “The Author as Producer”



Social Issues and the role of artists in portraying them were hotly debated in the 1930s.



Workers' International Relief



This group originally was set up to gather international donations for famine relief in the USSR, then moved on to strike relief around the world.

Workers' International Relief (WIR), an initiative of the Comintern, was also active during the strikes in the Yorkshire and Lancashire textile industries in 1930. This picture was taken there. Jim Ancrum, a W.I.R. organiser during the strikes is standing on the right and wearing a cap.
From: <http://unrepentantcommunist.blogspot.com/2009/05/photo-of-workers-international-relief.html>